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REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 2, 15, 16, 18 and 23 are canceled and claims 1, 3, 6, 7, 10-14, 17, 19 and 22 are amended. Claims 4, 5, 8, 9, 20 and 21 remain as originally filed. Claims 24 and 25 were previously canceled. As a result, claims 1, 3-14, 17 and 19-22 remain pending in the application. Claims 1, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19 and 22 are amended to include the patentable limitations of the allowable claims identified in the Office Action mailed June 9, 2006. Claim 3 is amended to provide proper dependency from base claim 1. Claims 7 and 11 are amended to more clearly recite the claimed invention.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

Pursuant to paragraph 1 of the Office Action, claims 1, 4-5, 7-9, 11, 14, 16, 18, 20-21 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable (obvious) over United States Patent No. 6,061,492 (Strause et al.) and United States Patent No. 5,892,870 (Fingler et al.). The Examiner asserts that “[a]t the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to use the patch panel taught by Fingler in place of the fan-out blocks taught by Strause since Fingler teaches that the patch panel can be used for connection to a server and other equipment.” See Office Action at page 3.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection with respect to the amended independent claims presented herein. Independent claim 1 is amended to include the patentable limitations of allowable claim 2. Thus, claim 1 is patentable. Claims 4-5, 7-9 and 11 depend directly or indirectly from patentable base claim 1. Independent claim 14 is amended to include the patentable limitations of allowable claim 15. Thus, claim 14 is patentable. Claims 20-21 depend directly from patentable base claim 14. Claims 16, 18 and 23 are cancelled. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claims 1, 4-5, 7-9, 11, 14, 16, 18, 20-21 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

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Allowable Subject Matter

Pursuant to paragraph 3 of the Office Action, claims 2-3, 6, 10, 12-13, 15, 17, 19 and 22 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Independent claim 1 is amended to include the patentable limitations of allowable claim 2. Claim 3 is amended to depend directly from patentable base claim 1. Allowable claims 6, 10, 12 and 13 are rewritten independent form including all of the limitations of rejected base claim 1 and the corresponding intervening claim 4 or 8. Independent claim 14 is amended to include the patentable limitations of allowable claim 15. Allowable claims 17, 19 and 22 are rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the rejected base claim 14. Furthermore, original claims 4, 5, 8, and 9 and currently amended claims 7 and 11 depend directly or indirectly from patentable base claim 1, and therefore, are likewise allowable for at least the same reasons. Likewise, original claims 20 and 21 depend directly from patentable base claim 14, and therefore, are likewise allowable for at least the same reasons. Claims 2, 15, 16, 18 and 23-25 are cancelled. Accordingly, Applicants submit that pending claims 1, 3-14, 17 and 19-22 are patentable.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection and objection to the claims and to reconsider the application as amended herein. This Amendment is timely filed, fully responsive to the Office Action and places the application in condition for immediate allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to issue a Notice of Allowability for the pending claims 1, 3-14, 17 and 19-22. Applicants encourage the Examiner to contact the undersigned directly to further the prosecution of any remaining issues, and thereby expedite allowance of the application. This Amendment results in 4 more independent claims, but no more total claims than paid for previously (i.e., 7 independent claims and 18 total claims pending). Accordingly, a fee for excess independent claims in the amount of \$800 is believed to be due. The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any fee due in connection with the filing of this response, including the excess claims fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-2167. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 not already accounted for, such an extension is requested and the fee should likewise be charged to Deposit Account No. 19-2167. Any overpayment should be credited to Deposit Account No. 19-2167.

Respectfully submitted,



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